



The Spirit of the Age; or, Contemporary Portraits - Hazlitt

**The Spirit of the Age; Or, Contemporary Portraits
William Hazlitt**

William Hazlitt was a keen observer of his time and the people populating the literary landscape. He presents short monographs on such illustrious persons as Jeremy Bentham, known for his philosophy of utility, William Godwin, who raised the standard of morality above the reach of humanity, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Edward Irving, who keeps the public in awe by insulting all their favourite idols, Horne Tooke, Sir Walter Scott, Lord Byron, Thomas Campbell, who wrote Pleasures of Hope, James Mackintosh, appointed Recorder (chief judge) of Bombay in 1804, William Wordsworth, Thomas Malthus, who wrote in answer to Mr. Godwin, William Gifford, who edited The Quarterly Review, Francis Jeffrey, who edited the Edinburgh Review, Henry Brougham, who founded the Edinburgh Review in 1802, Francis Burdett, one of the most pleasing speakers in the House, and is a prodigious favourite of the English people, William Wilberforce, whose first object and principle of action is to do what he thinks right, Robert Southey, the best and most natural prose-writer of any poet of the day, Thomas Moore, who wrote Fables for the Holy Alliance, and Leigh Hunt, we will venture to oppose his Third Canto of the Story of Rimini for classic elegance and natural feeling to any equal number of lines from Mr. Southey's Epics or from Mr. Moore's Lalla Rookh. Charles Lamb wrote Essays of Elia under his pseudonym Elia and Washington Irvine wrote under the pseudonym Geoffrey Crayon. Hazlitt compares the two in his final essay. - Summary by Craig Campbell

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